

Secular Bangladeshi Diaspora

Thank you, Madame Chair and distinguished delegates. In Bangladesh, religious minorities have made tremendous contributions to peaceful coexistence and intercommunity trust. Despite their rich contributions, several barriers continue to undermine harmony. One key barrier is the political underrepresentation of minority communities, which limits their ability to influence policy-making and advocate for their rights. Religious intolerance and sporadic violence, often fueled by misinformation or extremist narratives, create fear and insecurity. When trust is broken, it can take years, sometimes generations to rebuild. Compounding this challenge is weak legal protection, which deepens frustration when perpetrators of violence go unpunished. The indigenous community of the Chittagong Hill Tracts have been at the forefront of peace advocacy, especially through their involvement in the 1997 CHT Peace Accord. Local minority organizations, such as the Development and Peace-Building Initiative of Bangladesh and the United Religion Initiative Bangladesh Corporation, run projects focusing on mediation for land disputes, social conflicts, and cultural misunderstandings. After [inaudible] government in August 2024 by Islamic radicals, the persecution against minority communities increased manyfold. The UN HRC should take action so that the present government in Bangladesh can put an end to the situation and also instruct them to continue engagement with minorities to strengthen pluralism, enhance democracy, and guarantee their protection and dignity for all its citizens. Thank you very much.